

Mesoamerican Reef Fund

MAR Fund



www.marfund.org

The Mesoamerican Reef

- Largest reef in the Atlantic Ocean
- Over 1000 km of coastline
- Largest transboundary reef, 4 countries
- Biologically diverse
- Nearly 3 million people
- The reef has an annual value of U\$4.5 B – reef related tourism, fisheries and shoreline protection
- Global public good



Mesoamerican Reef Fund – MAR Fund

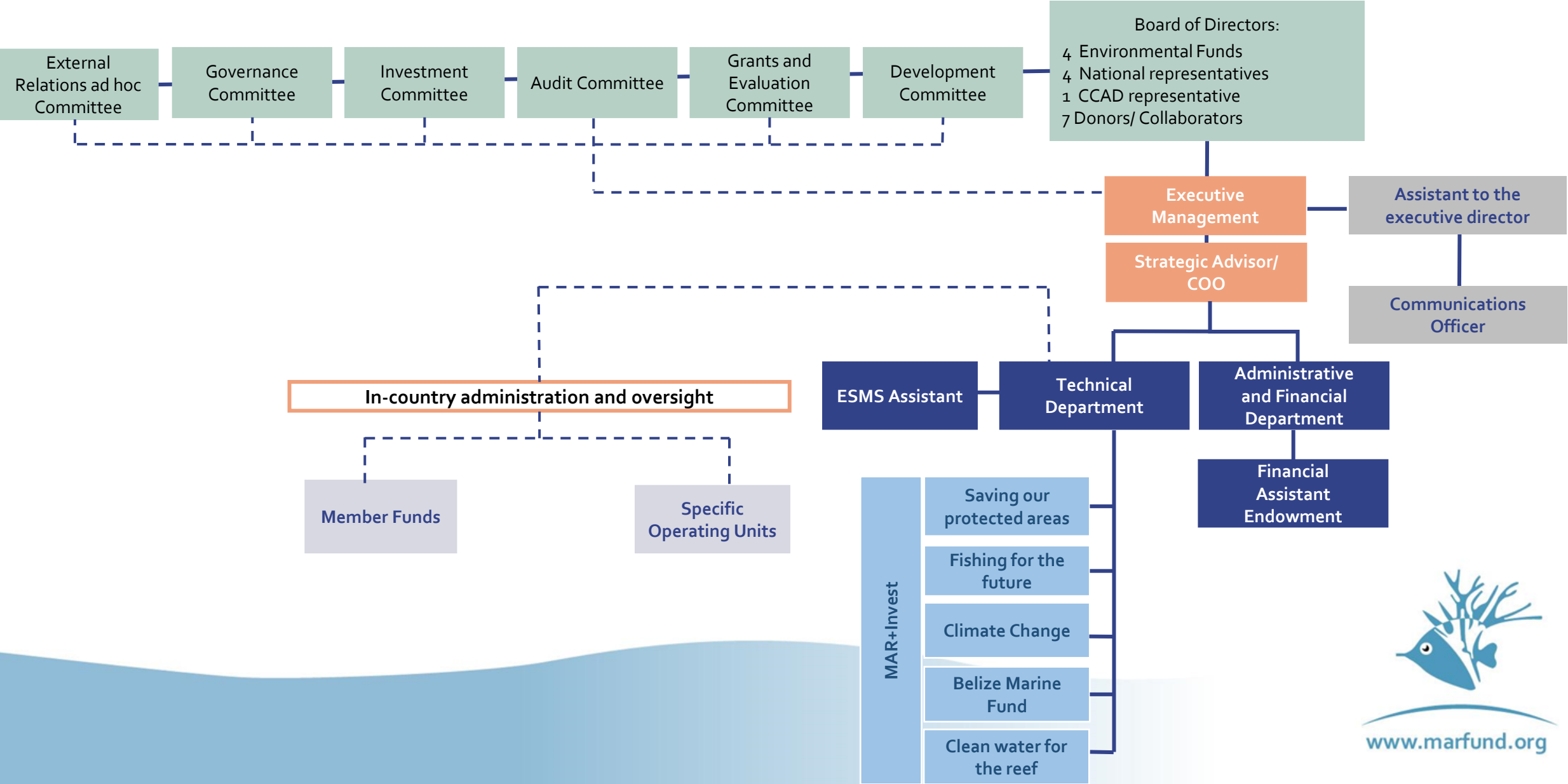
Mission

MAR Fund seeks, secures and facilitates regional funding, fosters partnerships and drives capacity building for the conservation, restoration, and sustainable use of marine and coastal ecosystems in the Mesoamerican Reef.

- ☐ Long-term, private financial mechanism
- ☐ Designed to raise and distribute funds at a regional scale
 - Complementary funds
 - Additional to national funds
 - Endowment, project and sinking funds
- ☐ Responds to the needs of the region – reduction of threats
- ☐ Established as a non-profit in USA 501 (c) 3
- ☐ Branch in Guatemala

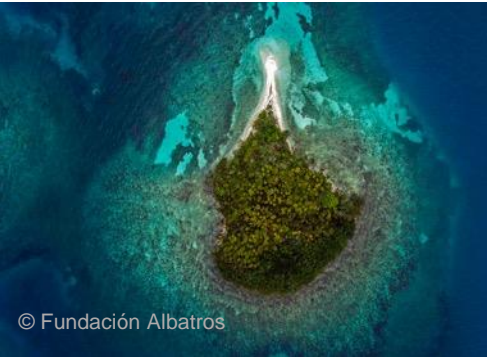


A lean regional structure



Programs

MAR Fund operates through 5 programs:



Saving our
protected areas



Fishing for the
future



Climate
change, the
need is now



Clean water
for the reef



Belize Marine
Fund

Cross-cutting project: MAR+Invest



Donor
GLOBAL FUND FOR
CORAL REEFS

Partners



FONDO MEXICANO
PARA LA CONSERVACIÓN
DE LA NATURALEZA, A.C.
INSTITUCIÓN PRIVADA



VIWALA
capital de impulso



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A few key results



Saving our protected areas

- ✓ 25 MPAs supported in the MAR
- ✓ 5 multi-annual projects to support strengthening of MPAs
- ✓ Emergency support to MPA co-managers in Belize and Honduras during pandemic



Fishing for the future

- ✓ 44 Fish replenishment zones supported
- ✓ Regional monitoring network for fish spawning aggregation sites



Clean water for the reef

- ✓ Improvements to the Polo's Water Association waste water treatment plant in Honduras
- ✓ Establishment of the Roatan Recycling Association (RRA)
- ✓ Baseline studies on water quality and solid waste in Mexico, Honduras and Guatemala
- ✓ Establishment of the Auxiliary Bodies of the Yucatan Peninsula Watershed Council

A few key results



Climate change

- ✓ Emergency Fund triggered in October 2020 to support reef rehabilitation in Puerto Morelos National Park
- ✓ Insurance policy for hurricanes for 11 priority reefs along the MAR
- ✓ Parametric insurance triggered in November 2022 at Turneffe Atoll in Belize for Hurricane Lisa
- ✓ 83 people trained in post-storm emergency response capacities (government, NGO's, tourism service providers, scientists, volunteers)



Belize Marine Fund

- ✓ 63 grants –small, targeted and discretionary
- ✓ 15 MPAs supported
- ✓ 2 biennial meetings
- ✓ Contribution to gillnet buyback program
- ✓ Development of the WHS Branding Strategy and Communication Plan
- ✓ Development of the model for manatee distribution data analysis and aerial survey population estimates for Belize and the broader MAR region

Saving Our Protected Areas

Protection of Maritime Resources in Central America Phase III

Objective: Conservation and sustainable use of natural resources in and between selected coastal and marine protected areas in the MAR, to be achieved through three results:

- R1. The protected areas have better conditions for the conservation of their natural resources
- R2. Measures for sustainable use of natural resources are implemented with the participation of local communities
- R3. Cooperation is strengthened between key stakeholders for conservation of biodiversity in the MAR

2 requests for proposals:

- ✓1st: 14 CMPAs of the second priority-setting exercise
- ✓2nd: open to all CMPAs in the MAR, only joint proposals between two or more areas will be accepted



Fishing for the Future

MAR Fish

Objectives

- Support for monitoring and protecting a network of fish spawning aggregation sites.
- Obtain legal recognition and manage Cayman Crown in Guatemala and Belize, a newly discovered aggregation area





Climate Change

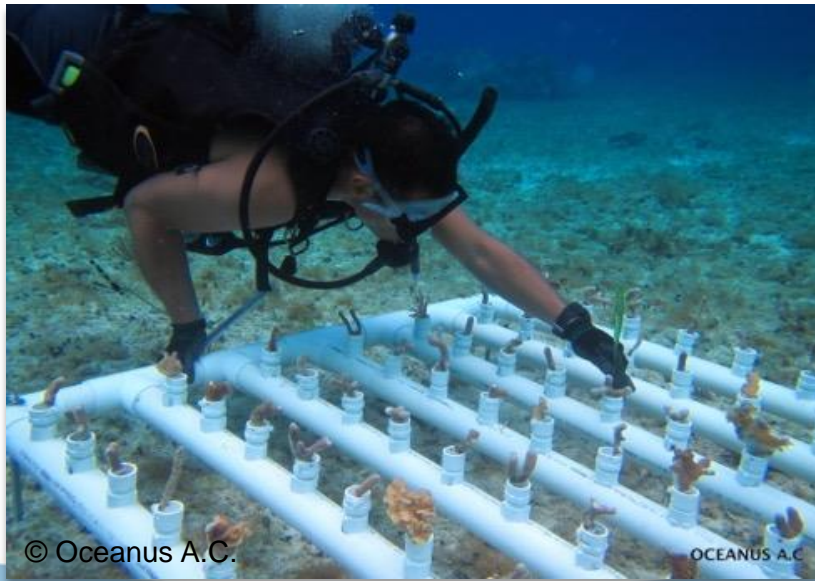
Reef Rescue Initiative

Objective

Increase the resilience of the MAR and of the environmental and cultural services it provides through:

- financial sustainability
- capacity building,
- regulations, and
- economic incentives

required for effective and timely restoration.



Some results

- Emergency Fund for disaster relief support
- Parametric insurance policy for 11 priority reefs along the MAR for immediate response after a hurricane
- Emergency brigades in Mexico, Belize, Honduras and Guatemala for post-storm emergency response (government, NGO's, tourism service providers, scientists, volunteers)
- Regional actions to address stony coral tissue loss disease (SCTLD)





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Mangroves

- Regional Strategy for Mangrove Management, Conservation, Restoration and Monitoring in the Mesoamerican Reef 2020-2025
- Manual for the Ecological Restoration of Mangroves in the MAR and the Wider Caribbean
- Mangrove restoration

Clean Water for the Reef

Objective

Support and strengthen efforts towards the management of waste water and solid waste.

- Water treatment plant in Roatán
- Capacity building for local communities
- Better practices in hotels and restaurants
- Water quality diagnostics
- Organization of waste collectors





Belize Marine Fund Program

Support for key marine conservation initiatives in Belize through:

- Small grants
- Targeted grants

E.g. Belize Barrier Reef World Heritage Site

MAR+Invest

Goal: To unlock private capital for investment in reef conservation in the MAR region.

- Multi-stakeholder approach.
- Enterprises with coral positive outcomes and market returns.
- Tailored training, development of impact indicators and measurement systems, strategic partnerships, and access to financial solutions.
- Raise equity and/or debt capital.
- Five initial portfolio projects.



Operation mechanisms/funding channels

- Small Grants
 - Traditional
 - Reef Rescue
- Specific projects
 - MAR Fish Project
 - “Protection of Maritime Resources” Project (KfW) (Sinking fund)
- Special Grants (e.g. Summit Foundation)
- Third party grant administration (e.g. Healthy Reefs Initiative)
- Endowment Fund (revenue)
- Sinking Fund



Networks and partnerships

MAR Fund has helped to create and supports the strengthening of:

- Mesoamerican Reef Connectivity Network
- Sustainable Fisheries Network
- MAR Reef Restoration Network (2 biennial meetings)
- Mesoamerican Mangrove and Seagrass Network

MAR Fund is a member of:

- Healthy Reefs for Healthy People Initiative (HRI)
- Mexico Biodiversity Funders
- Latin American and Caribbean Network of Environmental Funds (RedLAC, for its acronym in Spanish)
- International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)



Environmental and social management system (ESMS)

- The MAR Fund ESMS applies internationally recognized environmental and social standards to its granting activities
- This safeguard system will reduce and mitigate potential environmental and social risks and help to strengthen positive impacts
- Roll out of the system started in February 2022
- <https://marfund.org/en/esms/>



Long-term support required for opportunities in the region, such as:

- Regional networks
- Generation of critical scientific knowledge
- Strengthening of human capital
- Conservation/recovery of regional ecological assets and services
- Protection of new sites
- Strengthening of local conservation groups
- Market-based sustainable initiatives – Blue Economy



Now in its 19th year of
uninterrupted conservation work
MAR Fund has...

- Consolidated a professional working team
- Established strategic alliances
- Convened key conservation efforts in the region
- Become a learning community for conservation
- Mobilized resources successfully

Relevant stakeholder for conservation finance
solutions in the MAR



It has been a learning curve towards:

- A smarter, mature organization
- Steady sustainable growth
- Respected track record
- Clear program direction and priorities
- Network of collaborators
- Committed Board of Directors and advisory committees
- Established, credible institution



We strive for continuous improvement

Current challenges

- Fundraising for programmatic and operation costs – ongoing
- Catalytic capital for blue market initiatives
- Implementation of new Strategic Plan 2024-2028.



Thank you!



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